

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8367
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USMISSION USBERLIN
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AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08563

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GW, IR
SUBJECT: FRG-IRANIAN RELATIONS: FRG PRESIDENT SCHEEL'S
VISIT TO IRAN

REFS: (A) TEHRAN 3919; (B) BONN 7920; (C) TEHRAN 4002;
(D) BONN 8038; (E) BONN 8279 (ALL NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE FRG CONSIDERS IRAN AS THE MAIN
GUARANTOR OF POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF,
A VIEW WHICH HAS ONLY BEEN REINFORCED BY RECENT EVENTS
IN AFGHANISTAN. THE PURPOSE OF SCHEEL'S TRIP WAS TO
EMPHASIZE THIS POINT TO THE SHAH AND TO CORRECT ANY
LINGERING MISCONCEPTIONS REMAINING IN THE SHAH'S MIND
FROM HIS TUMULTUOUS 1968 VISIT TO GERMANY. DISCUSSIONS
FOCUSED ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN
EUROPE AND IRAN, BUT THE REAL BENEFITS OF THE VISIT ARE
VIEWED IN BONN AS LARGELY SYMBOLIC. END SUMMARY.

1. OUR DISCUSSIONS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON THE VISIT
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OF PRESIDENT SCHEEL TO IRAN PARALLELED AMEMBASSY
TEHRAN'S REPORTS QUITE CLOSELY. THE FOLLOWING IS
INTENDED TO SUPPLEMENT THAT REPORTING.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS, FRG-IRANIAN RELATIONS
HAVE BEEN BURDENED FOR OVER A DECADE BY THE SHAH'S
MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE FRG STEMMING FROM HIS 1968 VISIT.

(HIS APPEARANCE THEN SPARKED NUMEROUS AND SOMETIMES VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS. ONE OF THESE LED TO THE SHOOTING OF BENNO OHNESORG AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, TO THE GENESIS OF THE GERMAN TERRORIST MOVEMENT.) THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS CONVINCED THAT HE TOOK HIS STORMY RECEPTION HERE PERSONALLY. SCHEEL'S MAIN MISSION WAS TO REPAY THAT 1968 VISIT AND SOOTH OVER ANY LINGERING HURT FEELINGS. TO DO SO WAS PERCEIVED AS IN THE FRG'S INTEREST, GIVEN IRAN'S ROLE IN THE WORLD ECONOMY AND IN MAINTAINING POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE NEAR EAST.

3. ALTHOUGH THE SCHEEL DELEGATION MAINTAINED A HIGH PUBLIC PROFILE--THROUGH TRAVELS, SPEECHES, ETC.--THE SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF SCHEEL'S VISIT WAS RELATIVELY BRIEF. HE MET ALONE WITH THE SHAH FOR TWO HOURS, AND THE DELEGATIONS MET TOGETHER FOR LESS THAN 1-1/2 HOURS.

4. THE SHAH, IN HIS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TALKS, EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAN AND WESTERN EUROPE. ACCORDING TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, THE SHAH TOLD SCHEEL THAT IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF THIS RELATIONSHIP THAT HE HAD AGREED NOT TO SEEK ANOTHER OPEC PRICE INCREASE. HE HYPOTHESIZED THAT PRICES WOULD PROBABLY REMAIN STABLE UNTIL 1980 BUT THAT THRY WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO BE INCREASED, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE DECLINING VALUE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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DOLLAR. IN THE SHAH'S VIEW THE PRIMARY PROBLEM SEVERAL YEARS HENCE WOULD BE TO COMPENSATE THE OPEC STATES FOR THE DEFERRED INCREASES WITHOUT SHOCKING THE WORLD ECONOMY AS HAD HAPPENED IN 1973.

5. THE SHAH ALSO MADE A PITCH FOR GREATER PURCHASE OF IRANIAN OIL BY THE EUROPEAN STATES AND THE FRG IN PARTICULAR. HE TOLD SCHEEL THAT THE GROWTH OF BILATERAL TRADE IN OTHER AREAS WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON THIS, AMONG UNNAMED "OTHER FACTORS." NEVERTHELESS, OUR CONTACTS TELL US THAT NEITHER SIDE MENTIONED RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND THE EC.

6. SALES OF FRG MILITARY EQUIPMENT WERE DISCUSSED BRIEFLY DURING THE SCHEEL-SHAH MEETING. THE SHAH, WE ARE TOLD, WAS ALREADY AWARE OF FRG APPROVAL OF THE SUBMARINE DEAL AND WAS MORE INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF ACQUIRING 4-6 GERMAN FRIGATES. NO COMMITMENTS WERE MADE BY EITHER SIDE. (THE FRG WAS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE IRANIANS ARE INTERESTED IN TWO "PACKAGES" OF FRIGATES--ONE FROM THE FRG, ONE FROM THE NETHERLANDS--AND THAT THERE IS LITTLE CONSIDERATION OF

COMPETITION. (THE FOREIGN OFFICE INTERPRETS

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THIS AS A FURTHER IRANIAN ATTEMPT TO DIVERSIFY ITS ARMS
SOURCES.)

7. THERE WAS NO DETAILED DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE SHAH
AND SCHEEL ON THE PENDING SALE OF 4 NUCLEAR POWER
PLANTS TO IRAN (REFTEL B.) HOWEVER, THE SHAH DID HINT
AT A DESIRE FOR AN ADDITIONAL 2 POWER PLANTS. OUR
FOREIGN OFFICE CONTACTS TELL US THE SHAH'S REFERENCE
WAS MOST UNCLEAR; THE GERMAN ASSUMPTION IS THAT HE WAS
REFERRING TO CONVENTIONAL, NOT NUCLEAR, POWER PLANTS,
SINCE IRANIAN TECHNICAL PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES WERE
ALREADY SEVERELY STRAINED.

8. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST COMING OUT OF THE TALKS
INCLUDED:

-- THE IRANIANS TOLD THE FRG DELEGATION THAT GDR FOREIGN
MINISTER FISCHER'S APRIL VISIT TO TEHRAN "DID THE
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TRICK" OF PATCHING UP THE STRAINED BILATERAL RELATIONS.

-- THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS NOT RAISED IN ANY OF THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS.

-- ALTHOUGH HE ACCEPTED SCHEEL'S INVITATION TO VISIT THE FRG, THE FOREIGN OFFICE CONSIDERS IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT THE SHAH WILL COME THIS YEAR.

-- IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARI ALSO ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO VISIT THE FRG; DATES HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROPOSED AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE EXPECTS HIM IN OCTOBER.

9. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS THE VISIT WAS REALLY THE BRAINCHILD OF THE IRANIAN CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, A FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE FRG. WHEN HE HEARD OF SCHEEL'S PROPOSED TRIP TO JAPAN, HE USED HIS REMAINING CONTACTS IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO SUGGEST A TEHRAN STOPOVER. THE FOREIGN OFFICE DELIBERATED QUITE SERIOUSLY BEFORE RECOMMENDING THAT SCHEEL ACCEPT THE INVITATION, BALANCING IRAN'S STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO THE FRG AGAINST POSSIBLE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FLAK FOR LENDING PUBLIC SUPPORT TO THE SHAH. AS A COMPROMISE, IT WAS DECIDED TO GIVE THIS PORTION OF SCHEEL'S ITINERARY A VERY LOW PROFILE AND HOPE FOR THE BEST. (FOR EXAMPLE, THE VISIT ITSELF WAS ANNOUNCED ONLY A FEW DAYS BEFORE SCHEEL'S DEPARTURE FOR JAPAN.) SUBSEQUENT PRESS COVERAGE IN THE FRG WAS MINIMAL AND ANY PROTESTS WERE PRO-FORMA, MODERATE, AND LARGELY IGNORED.

IN RETROSPECT, THE FOREIGN OFFICE CONSIDERED THE VISIT
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VERY SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF GOODWILL GENERATED WITH THE IRANIANS. THE VISIT WAS CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY OPPORTUNE IN LIGHT OF THE COUP IN KABUL WHICH, FROM THE BONN PERSPECTIVE, ONLY HIGHLIGHTED IRAN'S IMPORTANCE TO THE FRG AND THE WEST AS A WHOLE. (SEE REFTTEL E.)
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